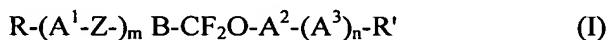


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended): A process for preparing Process for the preparation of a compound of the general formula (I)



in which

R is alkyl, in which one or more CH₂ groups are optionally may be replaced, independently of one another, by O, CF₂, CH=CH, CH=CF or CF=CF, with the proviso that peroxide structures O-O and formaldehyde acetals O-CH₂-O are excluded,

A¹ is, independently of one another, 1,4-cyclohexylene, 2,5-1,3-dioxanylene, 1,3-cyclobutylene or



A² and A³ are 1,4-penylene, in which, independently of one another, from one to four hydrogens are optionally may be replaced by fluorine or one or two CH groups are optionally may be replaced by N,

Z is a single bond, -CH₂-CH₂-, -CF₂-CF₂-, -CH=CH-, -CF=CF-, -CH=CF- or -CF=CH-,

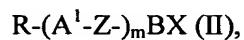
B is 2,6-disubstituted naphthalene, 2,6-disubstituted 5,6,7,8-tetrahydronaphthalene or 2,6-disubstituted trans-decalin,

R' is R, F, OCF₃, OCF₂H, CF₃, Cl, SF₅, CN or NCS, and

m and n are, independently of one another, 0 or 1,

said process comprising the following steps:

a) converting conversion of a compound of the general formula (II)



in which X is halogen or =O and the other symbols are as defined in relation to the formula (I), into a carboxylic acid derivative with elimination of the group X and introduction of a C1 unit; and

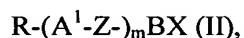
b) converting reaction of the said carboxylic acid derivative using with a phenol of the general formula (III)



in which A^2 , A^3 , R' and n are as defined in relation to the formula (I); to obtain a give the compound of the formula (I).

2. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 1, wherein said carboxylic acid derivative is a carboxylic acid of the formula (IV), R-(A¹-Z-)mB-CO₂H (IV), or a salt thereof, and characterised in that step a) is carried out as follows:

a') conversion of a compound of the general formula (II)



in which X is a halogen and the other symbols are as defined in relation to the formula (I), is converted into the corresponding Grignard compound, reacting reaction of the resultant Grignard compound with CO₂, and hydrolysing the resultant compound to form hydrolysis to the corresponding carboxylic acid of the formula (IV)



or a salt thereof.

3. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that wherein X in the formula (II) is selected from the group consisting of Cl, Br and I and is particularly preferably Br.

4. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 2 +, characterised in that, for the preparation of the wherein said Grignard compound [[,] is obtained by reacting a compound of the formula (II) in which B is [=] 2,6-decalinyl, 2,6-tetrahydronaphthyl or 2,6-naphthyl is reacted with magnesium in a solvent which comprises at least one nonpolar solvent and at least one polar solvent, with external supply of heat.

5. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that wherein the reaction of the Grignard compound with CO₂ is carried out using with gaseous CO₂.

6. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 2 +, wherein an ester is obtained from a characterised in that the esters are obtained from the carboxylic acid of formula acids (IV) and using a phenol the phenols of the formula (III) HO-A²(A³)_n-R', in which A², A³, R' and n are as defined in relation to the formula (I), by reaction under water-eliminating conditions, and said ester is subsequently converted into a compound of formula (I).

7. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 6 +, wherein characterised in that the ethers the ether of formula (I) is are obtained from the esters by conversion of said ester by into the bisalkylthionium salts (V) and reaction thereof with the phenol (III) in an oxidative fluorodesulfuration.

8. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 1 7, wherein said carboxylic acid derivative is a bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt characterised in that the which is obtained by reacting a carboxylic acid of formula (IV)
$$R-(A^1-Z-)_mB-CO_2H \quad (IV)$$
 is reacted with an alkylthiol to obtain said a preferably cyclic alkylthiol, in particular from the group consisting of ethanedithiol, propanedithiol and 1,2-benzenedithiol, to give the bisalkylthionium bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt, said bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt is then reacted with said phenol of formula (III) to form an orthoester, and said orthoester is converted to an ether of formula (I) by oxidative fluorination.

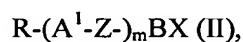
9. (Currently Amended): A process according to Claim 7 +, characterised in that the oxidant employed in the oxidative fluorodesulfuration is a compound which liberates halonium equivalents, preferably from the group consisting of dibromohydantoin, dimethylbibromohydantoin, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, SO_2Cl_2 , SO_2ClF , nitrosenium and nitronium salts, chloramine T and bromine, particularly preferably bromine.

10. (Currently Amended): A process according to Claim 7 +, characterised in that wherein the fluorinating agent employed in the oxidative fluorodesulfuration is selected from aliphatic and aromatic amine/ hydrogen fluoride complexes, pyridine/hydrogen fluoride complexes, $\text{NEt}_3 \bullet 3\text{HF}$, 50% HF in pyridine, melamine•HF and polyvinylpyridine•HF.

11. (Currently Amended): A process according to Claim 6 +, characterised in that wherein the ester is reacted with a fluorinating agent in the presence of an oxidant, preferably a brominating agent, to give an ether of formula the ethers (I) with formation of a thioester as an intermediate the thioesters as intermediates.

12. (Currently Amended): A process according to Claim 1, wherein said carboxylic acid derivative is a bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt and characterised in that step a) is carried out as follows:

a“) conversion of a compound of the general formula (II)



in which X is an =O group, is converted into a bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt by reaction with a suitable sulfur-containing compound.

13. (Currently Amended): A process according to Claim 12, characterised in that a ketene dithioketal is prepared by reaction wherein a compound of formula (II) is reacted with [[a]] an optionally substituted 2-silyl-1,3-dithiane, which may be optionally substituted, preferably 2-trimethylsilyl-1,3-dithiane, in the presence of a deprotonating compound, preferably alkyllithium, particularly preferably n-butyllithium, and to obtain a ketene dithioketal which is subsequently converted into a bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt, preferably by acidification.

14. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 13 +2, characterised in that the said ketene dithioketal is converted into said bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt by acidification and the acid employed for the protonation of said ketene dithioketal is one of the general formula H⁺Y⁻, preferably trifluoromethanesulfonic acid or tetrafluoroboric acid/diethyl ether complex.

15. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 12, wherein said characterised in that the bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt has a non-coordinating or weakly coordinating anion, which is preferably selected from the group formed by tetrafluoroborate, hexafluorophosphate, perchlorate and perfluoroalkylsulfonate, in particular trifluoromethanesulfonate.

16. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 12, wherein said bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt is reacted with said phenol of formula (III) in the presence of an oxidant and a fluorinating agent, and said characterised in that the oxidant employed is a compound which liberates halonium equivalents, preferably dimethyl dibromohydantoin, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, SO₂Cl₂, SO₂ClF, nitrosonium and nitronium salts, chloramine T or bromine, particularly preferably bromine.

17. (Currently Amended): A process Process according to Claim 12, wherein said bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt is reacted with said phenol of formula (III) in the presence of an oxidant and a fluorinating agent, and said characterised in that the fluorinating agent is selected from the group formed by aliphatic and aromatic amine/hydrogen fluoride complexes, pyridine/hydrogen fluoride complexes, NEt₃•3HF, 50% HF in pyridine, melamine•HF and polyvinylpyridine•HF.

18. (New): A process according to Claim 3, wherein X in formula (II) is Br.

19. (New): A process according to Claim 8, wherein said alkylthiol is a cyclic alkylthiol.

20. (New): A process according to Claim 8, wherein said alkylthiol is ethanedithiol, propanedithiol or 1,2-benzenedithiol.

21. (New): A process according to Claim 9, wherein said compound which liberates halonium equivalents is selected from the group consisting of dibromohydantoin, dimethyldibromohydantoin, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, SO₂Cl₂, SO₂ClF, nitrosonium and nitronium salts, chloramine T and bromine.

22. (New): A process according to Claim 11, wherein the oxidant is a brominating agent.

23. (New): A process according to Claim 16, wherein said compound which liberates halonium equivalents is selected from the group consisting of dibromohydantoin, dimethyldibromohydantoin, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, SO₂Cl₂, SO₂ClF, nitrosonium and nitronium salts, chloramine T and bromine.